

Little Compton School Building Committee

Minutes

Meeting held on January 25, 2012

Wilbur McMahon School – 6:00 pm

Members present: Tom Alder, Donald Gomez, Kathryn Crowley, Robert Mushen, Ben Gauthier, Mark Rapp, John Osborne

Members absent: Jim Gibney (due to extended illness), Dave MacGregor

A quorum was present. Chairman Tom Alder called the meeting to order at 6:03.

A motion was made by Don Gomez, and seconded by Mark Rapp to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2012 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent Kathryn Crowley informed the Committee that the Building Committee needed to file a report with the State Board of Elections in preparation for its outreach efforts. School Counsel would forward the appropriate paperwork.

Superintendent Crowley informed the Committee that if public funds were being expended on the outreach effort, that Committee members could not ask voters to cast a “Yes” for the project at a referendum.

There was a general sense presented by several committee members that the Committee’s role should be as a resource to the residents. Our focus should be on presenting the plan, the reasons it is required, and the resulting cost. Voters should be left to make up their own minds based on the merits of the project. It would, however, be acceptable for individual residents not directly involved in the process to appeal to voters to cast a “Yes” vote. It was agreed that School Counsel should review any future correspondence prior to distribution, to ensure that it is legally appropriate.

Superintendent Crowley informed the Committee that initial discussions were promising regarding the potential use of the town’s churches as temporary housing for the students during construction. The United Congregational Church and St. Andrew’s Church were contacted and visited by Superintendent Crowley. It was noted that they would work well, as they both are handicap accessible, and have food preparation areas. It was thought that some classes could be combined, and co-taught. Both seemed eager to work with the school. There was no feedback available on St. Catherine’s church, as Rev. Gerald Hussey had been away for several weeks. Supt. Crowley indicated that she would contact him upon his return.

It was the hope of Supt. Crowley that the entire school could be vacated during the construction, thereby providing an opportunity to shorten the duration of the project, which could result in lower costs. The gym would remain online during construction on the remainder of the building. There was general agreement amongst committee members, and member's of the public present, that this could be a great opportunity for the school, and that it should be further vetted out. It was also noted that the Town Hall could provide temporary Administrative space.

There was a discussion regarding the timeline towards a referendum. Committee member Bob Mushen initially questioned if the fifty-day filing window required for the establishment of a referendum might begin the day that the Town Council agreed to authorize a bond referendum to go before the voters, which was January 19th . This was found to not be the case, and that the Council first needed to adopt a resolution containing the appropriate language requesting that legislation be introduced to the General Assembly that would grant that a bond referendum be held. Mr. Mushen indicated that the Council would meet as soon as possible to adopt the aforementioned resolution.

Discussion turned to the Outreach effort, specifically the Newsletter. The contents were reviewed, and several suggestions were made. It was thought to be too lengthy, and that it could be shorter. It was

suggested by committee member Donald Gomez, and echoed by fellow School Committee member Joe Quinn, that the initial newsletter need not contain all the specifics of the project, and that subsequent correspondence such as a Sakonnet Times “mailer” could be utilized to provide more specific information. Portions of the newsletter were selected for removal, and Outreach coordinator Heather Fitzgerald agreed to provide a revised copy for review at the next meeting, which is scheduled for February 1st.

A motion was made by Chairman Tom Alder, and seconded by Donald Gomez to adjourn at 7:50. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Tom Alder